



Video Transcription
Commissioner of Education Chris Nicastro
September 2014

Hi, I'm Chris Nicastro, Commissioner of Education for the State of Missouri. Thanks for watching this month's Top 10 by 20 Update.

As the school year begins, I'd like to take a moment to thank all of Missouri's educators. Teachers have the most important job, and I am proud of the hard work and dedication you show while doing what's best for Missouri's kids. I hope you all have a great school year!

The State Board of Education voted unanimously in August to classify the Kansas City Public Schools as provisionally accredited. The district has shown gains in student growth, but there is more work to be done. Kansas City must continue to build on its growth of the last few years. Students in Kansas City deserve fully accredited, high quality schools. The Department will continue to work with the Kansas City Public Schools to help with its improvement efforts.

August was also a month of performance reports from MAP scores to ACT:

The Department released the state's 2014 Missouri Assessment Program, or MAP scores. While more than 300 districts and charter schools in Missouri saw gains in either math or communication arts, statewide averages dropped in language arts, math and science. We are pleased that many districts showed improvement, but we are concerned with the drop in scores overall.

There are a number of factors that may have contributed to the drop in scores, including the change in testing form and inclement weather that forced many students to miss class time. We also expect some decline initially as districts transition to new, more rigorous standards.

The Department also released the state's Annual Performance Report, or APR, in August. These reports are used to determine how well Missouri's schools are meeting state standards. They are also used, along with other factors, in establishing district accreditation. Nearly 97 percent of districts earned at least 70 percent of the possible points, which is what required for full accreditation. That is an increase of 10 districts from 2013.

ACT published its 2014 annual report last month, and the Department was pleased to see Missouri students increased their composite score for the first time in almost 10 years. The average score for

Missouri students rose from 21.6 to 21.8. That is above the national average of 21. The percentage of Missouri students who met ACT benchmarks also rose in both reading and science.

Finally, I would like to extend my congratulations to Chris Holmes who has been named Missouri's 2014-15 Teacher of the year. Chris teaches journalism at Hazelwood West High School. Chris and the other finalists will be honored at a banquet later this year. Keep up the good work!

Please continue to stay updated on our efforts to help Missouri's kids reach the Top 10 by 20 by following the Department on Twitter and liking the Department on Facebook. Thanks for all you do to help Missouri's kids.